U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2005-218-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): None

PROJECT NAME: Rangely Jeep Trails

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T1N R103W Sections 9, 10, 11 & 12 6th PM

APPLICANT: BLM & Town of Rangely

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional): Unmanaged recreation impacts to both natural resources and associated disbenefits to recreation experience.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: The Town of Rangely has identified certain recreational activities carried out by citizens of Rio Blanco County and others in the region that are in most need of formal development for economic and environmental management considerations. These are fully described in the Town's Comprehensive Plan (www.rangely.com) where strategic development options are discussed. The plan calls for formal recreational development as informal use of Bureau of Land Management properties causes resource conflicts, lessens the experience of users, and is not productive to long-term economic or environmental sustainability. To overcome these conflicts and to promote proper economic viability of the recreational activities, the Town of Rangely has earmarked key activities for formal development. One of the most prominent is the relatively new sport of Rock Crawling. This sport involves utilizing particular geologic rock features to provide a challenging driving experience in specially designed off road vehicles. This activity is akin to rock climbing in a truck. Of particular interest to Rangely is the fact that there are a large number of rock outcroppings in the area that appeal to enthusiasts of this sport and subsequently there are a high proportion of participants for this sport in the area. The Town, working with local citizens and enthusiasts clubs, has identified an area in close proximity to Rangely for the formal development of Rock Crawling track system.

Proposed Action: The Town of Rangely is proposing to identify and develop Rock Crawling tracks in an area south west of Rangely Colorado approximately 1 mile just outside Town limits as outlined on Map 1. No route construction is planned per se, as routes will be identified by

signage or the painting of blazes on rock surface. It is accessed Rio Blanco County Road 23 on the east side, BLM road 1111 and 1072 on the west side of the proposed project area. The method of construction will mostly be chainsaw work to remove branches and selected trees, moving certain rocks with hand tools and winches to facilitate travel by jeeps, and the creation of winching points along the trail. Winch points will be created by drilling into selected large rocks with a human-transported gasoline drill, then inserting an eye-bolt secured by epoxy glues. These would be placed above difficult pitches of the route to allow self-rescue of vehicles and to deter driving off-route. The rough terrain makes the proposed route unusable for other types of off-highway vehicles, and such use will be discouraged by signing and by direct contact with ATV and motorcycle organizations requesting their compliance.

The Rangely Rock Crawlers Association has expressed a desire to adopt the route proposed for development. The club is willing to provide a variety of services including financial support, labor, and equipment time. A formal written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be established between BLM and the club. The MOU with the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association would include:

- Assist BLM in maintaining the trail.
- Help install and maintain informational and directional signs, and signs concerning the adopt-a-trail program.
- Help design and develop interpretive materials to enhance the off-highway driving experience.
- Assist with unwanted route closure and rehabilitation.
- Monitor the trail for unacceptable resource damage and improper behavior. Should improper use of the trail occur, the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association will be responsible for organizing volunteer personnel to take immediate action to correct the problem(s). The trail will be monitored monthly for the first 12 months.
- Remove trash along the trail.
- Help promote the use of the "Tread Lightly' program.
- Provide the BLM with an annual report of all volunteer hours and activities.
- Discuss all major actions with BLM prior to any work being performed.

No Action Alternative: Under the no-action alternative the proposed action would not be initiated or approved. Present management of the area would continue.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION: Rock crawlers in the area desire to develop a true experience for enthusiasts that preserves the character of the land by having correctly identified tracks that are signed and prevents indiscriminate use of the area that leads to destruction of vegetation, soils, rock features, and riparian areas. Without proper designation expanded use will lead to tracks and uses that do not preserve the character of the area and lead to expanded conflict between existing uses of the land.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Page 2-40

Decision Language: "Provide a broad spectrum and diversity of recreation opportunities to meet expected demand by: 1) providing services to the visiting public; 2) maintaining high quality facilities to meet public needs and demand; and 3) improving public understanding and support of BLM programs through communication and partnerships."

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The entire White River Resource area has been classified as either attainment or unclassified for all pollutants, and most of the area has been designated prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) class II. The proposed action is not located within a ten mile radius of any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas. The air quality criteria pollutant likely to be most affected by the proposed actions is the level of inhalable particulate

matter, specifically particles ten microns or less in diameter (PM_{10}) associated with fugitive dust. In addition, slight increases in the following criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, ozone (secondary pollutant), nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide may also occur during peak periods of recreation due to the combustion of fossil fuels. Also, non-criteria pollutants such as visibility, nitric oxide, air toxics (e.g. benzene) and total suspended particulates (TSP) may also experience slight increases as a result of the proposed actions (no national ambient air quality standards have been set for non-criteria pollutants). Unfortunately, no air quality monitoring data is available for the survey area. However, it is apparent that current air quality near the proposed location is good because only one location on the western slope (Grand Junction, CO) is monitoring for criteria pollutants other than PM_{10}. Furthermore, the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) estimates the maximum PM_{10} levels (24-hour average) in rural portions of western Colorado to be near 50 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$). This estimate is well below the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for PM_{10} (24-hour average) of 150 $\mu g/m^3$ (CDPHE-APCD, 2005).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Advertisement of the proposed rock crawling area may increase the number of recreationists in the area. Cumulative impacts detrimental to air quality near the town of Rangely, CO may result as carbon monoxide, ozone (secondary pollutant), nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide levels can be elevated as a result of increased traffic associated with this type of recreation. Increased production of particulate matter (PM_{10}) during peak recreation periods may result as surface disturbance increases, and rock crawling vehicles produce elemental and organic carbon via fuel combustion. Elemental and organic carbon existing in the air as PM_{10} can reduce visibility and increase the potential of respiratory health problems to exposed parties. Implementation of a sufficient travel management plan would greatly reduce potential adverse impacts to local air quality resulting from fugitive dust production associated with the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Currently no restrictions or guidelines are in place to prevent off road travel from April 30th to October 1st. With the no action alternative identified rock crawling routes will not be mapped or advertised to potential recreationists and current levels of use in the area will likely continue. Air quality impacts resulting from combustion of fossil fuels are not anticipated with continuation of current use in the area. However, current recreation activities combined with the existing travel management plan will continue to increase surface disturbance, deteriorate existing vegetation and leave soils further exposed to eolian processes increasing the potential for fugitive dust production and deteriorating local air quality during dry and windy periods.

Mitigation: None

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The area of the proposed rock crawling trails has two sites and a number of isolated finds located within the project boundaries. The known sites have been heavily impacted by vandalism and development in the area. One site has recently been re-visited and re-evaluated as not eligible. One site was not readily identifiable during inventory

and may have been destroyed in the years since it was first identified. Isolated finds are not considered to be significant cultural resources. Two new resources were identified during project inventory, both of which are historic resources and not considered NRHP eligible. Additional sites are located within one half mile of the proposed rock crawling track and have probably been heavily impacted by unauthorized collecting over the years too.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed rock crawling trails will not impact any resources listed on or eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. All sites currently identified are either ineligible historic resources or prehistoric resources that have been heavily impacted by previous activity in the area and are no longer intact enough to warrant nomination to the NRHP.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Illicit rock crawling would continue and currently occurring impacts would continue.

Mitigation: 1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

3. The applicant shall be required to have a participant education program in place detailing the legal requirements for not collecting or molesting cultural resources in accordance with

applicable law. The awareness statement shall stress the importance of site context and taking only pictures and leaving only foot prints, at most, at all site locations.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: In the Rangely area there are a number of noxious weed species that are within the project area, or are capable of exploiting the habitat. Species of concern include cheatgrass, halogeton, Russian Knapweed, spotted knapweed, yellow starthistle and diffuse knapweed. These species all have the capability, if introduced, to establish in disturbed soils and move into the adjacent plant communities. With the exception of halogeton all of these species are difficult to control and if they are allowed to spread are expensive to control.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Implementing a program for off-road vehicles on public land increases the opportunity for introduction of noxious weeds including species that have not been found in the area or have been found in small numbers and treated. An example of a noxious weed that has been found in the county in limited numbers which was most likely brought in from California is yellow starthistle. Following the mitigation prescribed below, requiring the town of Rangely or their designee to control noxious weeds, the hazard of noxious weeds spreading onto the adjacent rangelands would decrease. With this alternative it is hoped that wide scale off-road vehicle use occurring on public lands would be decreased.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Wide spread off-road vehicle use is expected to occur at a similar or greater rate with the opportunity for noxious weed introduction and spread. Under this alternative the Town of Rangely would not be responsible for noxious weed control and weeds could be more widespread increasing the opportunity for the weeds to occupy significant acreage also increasing the cost of control.

Mitigation: The Town of Rangely or designee would be responsible for yearly monitoring of the project area to document the occurrence of noxious weed species. With the exception of cheatgrass and halogeton the permit holder is responsible for weed control in accordance with bureau policy and approvals by the BLM.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: A number of migratory birds fulfill nesting functions in the project area's juniper woodlands and sagebrush communities from late May through early August. Those bird populations identified as having higher conservation interest (i.e., Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Partners in Flight program) that are commonly found in these habitats include: juniper titmouse, gray vireo, black-throated gray warbler and loggerhead shrike (at extremely low densities) and sage sparrow. None of the species associated with these communities are narrowly restricted in abundance, distribution, or habitat preference.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Increased activity (e.g., vehicle traffic, noise levels, human presence) is likely to disrupt the nesting functions of migratory birds, especially in those instances where the nest site is in close proximity (~ 100 ft) to the proposed travel corridor. Increased human presence may result in temporary displacement of birds and in some cases, complete nest abandonment and subsequent nest failure.

There is concern that use of the area will continue to remain unmanaged resulting in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for migratory birds.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Impacts are expected to be similar to the proposed action but more widespread, resulting in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for migratory birds.

Mitigation: It is recommended that breeding bird surveys be conducted within the project area prior to approval of routes (late-May to early-June 2006). The project area should continue to be monitored each spring following implementation to determine abundance and distribution of breeding birds.

It is recommended that the project area be monitored to ensure that use of identified routes remains enforced. See Access & Transportation Section for further mitigation measures.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: There are no animals listed, proposed, or candidate to the Endangered Species Act that occupy or derive important benefit from the permit area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would have no conceivable affect on animals listed, proposed, candidate, or petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Similarly, there are no animals considered sensitive by BLM that would be potentially influenced by this action.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no-action alternative would have no conceivable affect on animals listed, proposed, candidate, or petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Similarly, there are no animals considered sensitive by BLM that would be potentially influenced by this action.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The proposed and no-action alternative would have no effective influence on special status species or associated habitat and would, therefore, have no potential to influence the status of applicable land health standards.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored or disposed of at sites included in the project area. Accidental spills or leaks associated with equipment failures, refueling, and maintenance of equipment could cause soil, surface water, and/or groundwater contamination during recreational activities.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials in excess of threshold quantities are proposed for use in this activity. While commercial preparations of fuels and lubricants used may contain some hazardous constituents, they will be used and transported in a manner consistent with applicable laws, and the generation of hazardous wastes would not be anticipated. Solid wastes would be properly disposed of.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no-action alternative.

Mitigation: The applicants shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed actions.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: *Surface Water:* The proposed action is situated in the White River watershed near Rangely, CO (5^{th} level watershed). Sub-catchments affected by the proposed actions are: Johnson Draw, Sulphur Draw, Coal Mine Draw, and Wood Road Draw. No perennial water sources or streams are located within the boundaries of the proposed recreation area. These ephemeral drainages flow primarily in response to low elevation snowmelt and high intensity precipitation events.

The "Status of Water Quality in Colorado – 2004" plus the 2006 update (CDPHE, 2006b) were reviewed for information related to the proposed recreation area. The White River near Rangely, CO is located in stream segment 21 of the White River basin. The White River is a tributary to the Green River (in Utah) which is a tributary to the Colorado River. All of the remaining subcatchments are situated in stream segment 22 of the White River basin.

Stream segment 21 has not been classified as use protected. An intermediate level of water quality protection applies to waters that have not been designated outstanding waters or use-protected waters. For these waters, no degradation is allowed unless deemed appropriate following an antidegradation review. Segment 21 has been designated by the state as being beneficial for the following uses: Warm Aquatic Life 1, Recreation 1a, and Agriculture. For stream segment 21, minimum standards for four parameters have been listed. These parameters

are: dissolved oxygen = 5.0 mg/l, pH = 6.5 - 9.0, Fecal Coliform = 200/100 ml, and 126/100 ml E. coli.

The State has classified stream segment 22 as "Use Protected". Stream segment 22 has been further designated by the state as being beneficial for the following uses: Warm Aquatic Life 2, Recreation 1b, and Agriculture. The antidegredation review requirements in the Antidegredation Rule are not applicable to waters designated use-protected. For those waters, only the protection specified in each reach will apply. For stream segment 22, minimum standards for four parameters have been listed. These parameters are: dissolved oxygen = 5.0 mg/l, pH = 6.5 - 9.0, Fecal Coliform = 325/100 ml, and 205/100 ml E. coli.(CDPHE, 2006b).

Newly promulgated Colorado Regulations Nos. 93 and 94 (CDPHE, 2006c and 2006d, respectively) were also reviewed for information related to the proposed project area drainages. Regulation No. 93 is the State's list of water-quality-limited segments requiring Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The 2006 list of segments needing development of TMDLs includes two segments within the White River - segment 9b, White River tributaries North & South Forks to Piceance Creek, specifically the Flag Creek portion (for impairment from selenium with a low priority for TMDL development) and segment 22, tributaries to the White River, Douglas Creek to the Colorado/Utah boarder, specifically West Evacuation Wash, and Douglas Creek (sediment impairments). Regulation 94 is the State's list of water bodies identified for monitoring and evaluation, to assess water quality and determine if a need for TMDLs exists. The list includes two White River segments that are potentially impaired – 9 and 22. Portions of stream segment 22 within the proposed recreation area have not been identified on the 303(d) or M&E List.

Ground water: A review of the US Geological Survey Ground Water Atlas of the United States (Topper et al., 2003) was done to assess ground water resources at the location of the proposed actions. Information presented in Topper et al. (2003) indicates the extent of the Mesaverde aquifer encompasses the project area south of Rangely, CO. Water quality within the Mesaverde Aquifer is generally of poor water quality (highly saline). The White River Alluvial Aquifer serves as the primary source of fresh water for the Town of Rangely, CO and is situated down gradient (~0.64 miles) from the proposed recreation area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Surface Water: Advertisement of the proposed rock crawling area north of Rangely, CO may increase the number of recreators that visit the area. Because no restrictions are currently in place to prevent cross country travel from April 30th to October 1st it can be expected that additional use will result in further resource damage as new roads will develop. New roads developed by OHV use will be of native surface, lack proper drainage relief structures and will substantially elevate sediment production and salt loads from the project area deteriorating water quality in the White River.

Ground Water: Recreational use in this area may result in spills or leaks of engine fluids such as antifreeze, motor oil, and gasoline. Engine fluids which are leaked, spilled, or discarded of on the ground surface will likely be transported down gradient to the White River during wet periods through colluvial material in shallow ground water. In addition, surface runoff will also transport and deposit contaminants down gradient to the White River Alluvium potentially reducing water quality in the White River and its alluvial aquifer.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Current use of the area north of Rangely, CO will continue as will the associated resource damage.

Mitigation: Construction of sediment retention structures below identified routes in Johnson Draw, Sulphur Draw, and Coal Mine Draw may be necessary to minimize potential increases in salt/sediment loads to the White River.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: Portions of stream segment 22 of the White River Basin have been listed on the states M&E List. However, the proposed recreation area is not within the boundaries of the listed portions and currently meets standards. With suggested mitigation, standards should continue to be met.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: There are no wetlands or riparian habitats conceivably affected by this action. The White River, representing the nearest aquatic habitat, is separated from the project area by about one mile.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would have no conceivable affect on wetland or riparian habitats.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no-action alternative would have no conceivable affect on wetland or riparian habitats.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: This project would have no conceivable influence on wetland or riparian conditions addressed in the Standards.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No ACEC's, flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, Wilderness, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

<u>NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS</u>

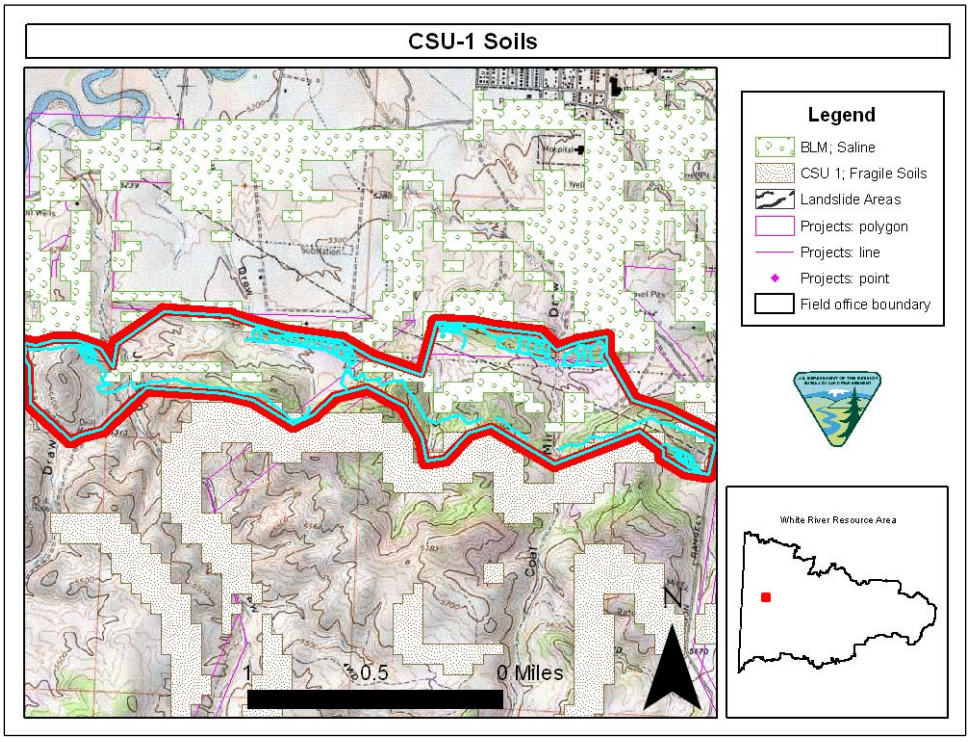
The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The following data is a product of an order III soil survey conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The accompanying table highlights important soil characteristics. A complete summary of this information can be found at the White River Field Office.

Soil Number	Soil Name	Slope	Affected acres	Ecological site	Salinity	Run Off	Erosion Potential	Bedrock
5	Badland	50-100%	69.43	None	-	Very rapid	Very high	0-10
55	Nihill channery sandy loam	5-50%	86	Saltdesert Breaks	<2	Medium	Moderate to very high	>60
74	Rentsac-Moyerson-Rock Outcrop complex	5-65%	1.12	PJ Woodlands / Clayey Slopes	<2	Medium	Moderate to very high	10-20
78	Rock Outcrop	50-100%	142.83	None	-	Very high	Slight	0
91	Torriorthents-Rock Outcrop complex	15-90%	147.26	Stoney Foothills	-	Rapid	Very high	10-20
94	Turley fine sandy loam	3-8%	78.03	Alkaline Slopes	2-4	Medium	Slight to moderate	>60

Control surface use (CSU-1) "saline soils" and "fragile soils" are situated throughout the proposed recreation area. The following map shows the locations of all potentially impacted CSU-1 soils.



5-Badland (10 to 65 percent slopes) soils are located on rolling to very steep, nearly barren mountainsides, low hills, ridgetops, and canyonsides. The native vegetation is mainly very sparse low desert shrubs and grasses. Elevation is 5,200 to 7,300 feet. The average annual precipitation is 8 to 18 inches, the average annual air temperature is 40 to 50 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 75 to 130 days. Badland soils are very shallow and exhibits no significant soil characteristics. The soil material consists of residuum gypsiferous shale and bentonite. Permeability of Badland is very slow. Available water capacity is very slow. Effective rooting depth is 0 to 10 inches. Runoff is very rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is very high, which results in a large amount of sedimentation during rainstorms and when snow melts.

55-Nihill channery sandy loam (5 to 50 percent slopes) is a deep, somewhat excessively drained soil found on toe slopes and terrace edges. It formed colluvium derived dominantly from sandstone. The native vegetation is mainly desert shrubs and grasses. Scattered pinyon and juniper trees are in some areas. Elevation is 5,100 to 5,800 feet. The average annual precipitation is 10 to 12 inches, the average annual air temperature is 47 to 49 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 105 to 130 days. Typically, 40 to 45 percent of the surface is covered with rock fragments, of which 5 to 10 percent is flagstones and 35 percent is channery fragments. The surface layer is brown channery sandy loam 5 inches thick. The upper 18 inches of the underlying material is pale brown channery loam and very channery loam, and the lower part to a depth of 60 inches or more is pale brown very channery sandy loam. Permeability of this Nihill soil is moderately rapid. Available water capacity is low. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate to very high.

74-Rentsac-Moyerson-Rock outcrop complex (5 to 65 percent slopes) is situated on foothills and ridges. The native vegetation is mainly pinyon and juniper trees with an understory of shrubs and grasses. Elevation is 5,800 to 7,200 feet. The average annual precipitation is 13 to 16 inches, the average annual air temperature is 42 to 45 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 75 to 105 days. The Rentsac soil is shallow and well drained. It formed in residuum derived dominantly from sandstone. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown channery loam about 5 inches thick. The next layer is brown very channery loam about 4 inches thick. The underlying material is very pale brown extremely flaggy loam 7 inches thick. Sandstone is at a depth of 16 inches. Depth to sandstone ranges from 10 to 20 inches. In some areas the surface layer is quite variable in texture. Permeability of the Rentsac soil is moderately rapid. Available water capacity is very low. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate to very high.

The Moyerson soil is shallow and well drained. It formed in residuum derived dominantly from shale. Typically, the surface layer is light gray stony clay loam about 2 inches thick. The next layer is gray clay loam about 8 inches thick. The underlying material is gray clay 7 inches thick. Shale is at a depth of 17 inches. Depth to shale ranges from 10 to 20 inches. In some areas the surface layer is silty clay loam, silty clay, light clay, or bouldery clay loam. Permeability of the Moyerson soil is slow. Available water capacity is low. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Runoff is medium to rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is very high.

78-Rock outcrop (50 to 100 percent slopes) is located on mountains, in canyons, and on ridges, hills, and upland breaks. It consists of barren exposures of sandstone, hard shale, siltstone, or limestone. Elevation is 5,100 to 9,600 feet. The average annual precipitation is 8 to 20 inches, the average annual air temperature is 38 to 50 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 45 to 130 days. This unit is 90 percent or more exposed bedrock with some soil material in the crevices and at the base of the slopes. Accumulations of boulder and stones are also common at the base of the slopes. Rock outcrop most commonly occurs as nearly vertical ledges and cliffs that are 3 to 50 feet high and 5 to 1,500 feet long.

91-Torriorthents-Rock outcrop complex (15 to 90 percent slopes) is located on extremely rough and eroded areas on mountains, hills, ridges, and canyonsides. Slopes mainly face south. The native vegetation is mainly sparse shrubs and grasses with some pinyon and juniper trees. Elevation is 5,100 to 7,500 feet. The average annual precipitation is 8 to 18 inches, the average annual air temperature is 40 to 50 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 70 to 130 days. Torriorthents are very shallow to moderately deep and are will drained and somewhat excessively drained. They formed in residuum and colluvium derived dominantly from sandstone, shale, limestone, and siltstone. Torriorthents are highly variable. No single profile of Torriorthents is typical, but one commonly observed in the survey area has a surface layer of pale brown channery loam about 3 inches thick. The underlying material is very pale brown channery loam, very channery loam, or fine sandy loam about 13 inches thick. Shale or sandstone is at a depth of 16 inches. Torriorthents are calcareous throughout. In some areas the surface layer is stony or flaggy. Permeability of the Torriorthents is moderate. Available water capacity is very low. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Runoff is very rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is very high. Rock outcrop consists of barren escarpments, ridge caps, and points of sandstone, shale, limestone, or siltstone. The escarpments are 3 to 50 feet thick and 25 to 2,500 feet long.

94-Turley fine sandy loam (3 to 8 percent slopes) is a deep, well drained soil situated on alluvial valley floors, fans, and low terraces. It formed in calcareous mixed alluvium derived dominantly from sandstone and shale. The native vegetation is mainly desert shrubs and grasses. Elevation is 5,000 to 5,800 feet. The average annual precipitation is 8 to 12 inches, the average annual air temperature is 45 to 50 degrees F, and the average frost-free period is 105 to 125 days. Permeability of this Turley soil is moderately slow. Available water capacity is high. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is slight to moderate. The soil is calcareous throughout.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: With the current travel management plan cross country OHV use is permitted from April 30th to October 1st. Designation/advertisement of rock crawling tracks north of Rangely, CO may increase the number of recreationists visiting the site ultimately increasing the amount of surface disturbance and associated soil erosion. Implementation of the proposed actions without a sufficient travel management plan could result in long term impacts detrimental to soil health such as reductions in infiltration and permeability rates, loss of effective vegetative cover, and decreased soil productivity.

Development and successful implementation of a sufficient travel management plan which restricts vehicular travel to identified travel routes (year round) would help to keep resource damage to a minimum. A sufficient travel management plan combined with specially identified rock crawling routes as outlined in the proposed action will help minimize adverse impacts to soil health within the proposed recreation area.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Currently no restrictions or guidelines are in place to prevent recreationists from traveling cross country during the period from April 30th to October 1st. With the no action alternative current OHV use of the area south of Rangely, CO will continue. With continuation of current use, potential for elevated soil erosion rates is anticipated as surface disturbance associated with cross country travel will likely increase.

Mitigation: Restrict vehicular travel to identified travel routes (year round).

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: As a result of cheat grass infestation throughout the project area, soils currently are not meeting land health standards for upland soils. Cheat grass has been identified as dominating the understory throughout the proposed recreation area. Cheat grass dominated areas typically lack appropriate infiltration and permeability rates and do not exhibit effective rooting depth to adequately stabilize soils.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The project area is primarily a hillside bunchgrass and juniper woodland vegetation type. On some sites which are south facing, sheep grazing of the 1950-1960s and use of these areas as bed grounds has left the soils enriched to the point of preventing vegetation growth. The hillside bunchgrass sites contain, sagebrush, shadscale, winterfat, Salina wildrye, beardless bluebunch wheatgrass, squirreltail, Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass and a variety of forb species. The juniper sites contain Utah juniper and are found on rock escarpments.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: It is expected that vegetation will be disturbed in association with vehicle use of the area. Roads are expected to widen, segments are expected to be abandoned once they become unusable and new roads will be established. Would expect junipers to be damaged and destroyed when they are used for winch anchors or for firewood or target practice. Vegetation damage is expected to be confined to the project area. Mitigation described below would be important in limiting vehicles to the identified routes and protecting vegetation.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Impacts are expected to be similar to the proposed action, although the damage is expected to be spread out through a larger area.

Mitigation: Barriers would be installed in specific locations to limit travel to the approved routes.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial)*: Within the project area there is expected to be a decrease in area meeting the standards for plant community health. Specifically noxious weeds primarily cheatgrass are expected to increase in dominance and area. The period for growth will be decreased with the increase on fast growing annual species.*

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: There is no aquatic wildlife or habitat conceivably affected by this action. The White River, representing the nearest aquatic habitat, is separated from the project area by about one mile.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would have no conceivable affect on aquatic wildlife or habitats.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no-action alternative would have no conceivable affect on aquatic wildlife or habitats.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): This project would have no conceivable influence on aquatic wildlife or habitat conditions addressed in the Standards.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The project area is generally characterized by ridges dominated with submature Utah juniper and rock outcrops. The bottoms are comprised of Gardner saltbush, Wyoming big sagebrush, native grasses and a heavy component of cheatgrass. This area is categorized by the Colorado Division of Wildlife as severe winter range - a specialized component of winter range that periodically supports virtually all an area's deer under the most severe winter conditions (i.e., extreme cold and heavy snowpack). These ranges typically sustain big game use from December through April.

The project area's juniper woodlands may support a variety of nesting raptors including red-tailed and the accipitrine hawks and long-eared owl. During field inspections conducted in early-March, a nesting long-eared owl was located within the project area, immediately adjacent to an existing road. The rock outcrops located within and adjacent to the project area provide nesting habitat for cliff-dwelling species such as golden eagle, great-horned owl and red-tailed hawk. The cliff face abutting the western end of the project area has historically been occupied since the early 1980's by golden eagles. No eagles were observed during field inspections conducted in early March.

Nongame mammals and birds using this area are typical and widely distributed in extensive like habitats across the Resource Area and northwest Colorado; there are no narrowly endemic or highly specialized species known to inhabit those lands potentially influenced by this action.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Increased activity (e.g., vehicle traffic, noise levels, human presence) is likely to disrupt the nesting functions of woodland and cliff-dwelling raptors, especially in those instances where the nest site is in close proximity (~ 100 ft) to the proposed travel corridor. Increased human presence may result in temporary displacement of birds and in some cases, complete nest abandonment and subsequent nest failure. Similarly, increased activity would likely result in the displacement of wintering big game and may preclude use of the area. Elevated energy demands due to increased activity can have adverse effects on the health of these animals, particularly during the critical winter months.

Portions of the route which run both west and immediately east of Johnson Draw do not follow existing rock surfaces and as such would result in the establishment of new route(s) through previously undisturbed areas. Development of the portion of the route located east of Johnson Draw would involve disturbing approximately 750 meters of juniper woodlands. These woodlands contain some of the largest trees within the project area and accordingly provide the best habitat for nesting raptors. Heavy use of this area would likely preclude nesting functions within the immediate vicinity.

There is concern that although routes will be identified, use of the area will continue to remain unmanaged. This would result in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for woodland and cliff-dwelling raptors. Similarly, unmanaged use would result in a greater incidence of disturbance to wintering big game.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Impacts are expected to be similar to the proposed action but more widespread, resulting in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for raptors. Unmanaged use of the area would likely result in a greater incidence of displacement of wintering mule deer and may preclude use of the area.

Mitigation: It is recommended that surveys be conducted each breeding season to determine the location and status (e.g., active vs. inactive) of woodland and cliff-dwelling raptors. If active nests are located, it is recommended that those areas be voluntarily avoided during the breeding season (1 February through mid-August or until the young have fledged).

It is recommended that no activity take place within the project area during 1 December to 30 April to minimize undue stress and displacement of wintering mule deer.

It is recommended that the route west of Johnson Draw and the connecting route to the east be removed from the proposed action. Portions of these routes do not follow existing rock surfaces and as such would result in the establishment of new route(s) through previously undisturbed areas.

It is recommended that the project area be monitored to ensure that use of identified routes remains enforced. See Recreation Section for further mitigation measures.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): This project, as mitigated, would not jeopardize the viability of any animal population. It would have no measurable consequence on terrestrial habitat condition, utility, or function, nor have any discernible effect on animal abundance or distribution at any landscape scale. The public land health standard would thus be met.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation			X
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management			X
Geology and Minerals			X
Hydrology/Water Rights	X		
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise		X	
Paleontology			X
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations			X
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

Affected Environment: The proposed 522 acre area is located where motorized travel is limited to existing routes from October 15th through April 30th and cross-country motorized travel is allowable the remainder of the year so long as no resource damage occurs. There are approximately 5.3 miles of existing routes at this time and new route proliferation is an ongoing concern.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The routes to be utilized by the extreme jeeps will typically be on slick rock, other routes will utilize existing routes while a small amount will be newly identified routes where no route has existed before. Providing access in the usual sense of the word is not the purpose of this proposed jeep trail, given its technically difficult nature and by providing a managed jeeping activity, it is likely that routes proliferation will decrease.

Jeepers would benefit by having a challenging route close to the Town of Rangely. Access or transportation would not be expected to be enhanced or diminished to any great degree from implementation of the proposal.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Continued unmanaged route creation is likely to occur.

Mitigation: BLM will enter into a MOU with the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association (attachment 1).

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The project area has stringers of Utah Juniper on rock outcrops. These areas are considered non-commercial, but are available for harvest. Very little use is made of these woodlands by the local population because of their short stature, which makes them unsuitable for fence posts. Local harvest of firewood within these stands is insignificant.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Use of the project area for off-road type vehicles is expected to intensify due to designation of the area and promotion of the area to enthusiasts. An example of this would be the Slick Rock Trail near Moab Utah which has become a mountain bike mecca through promotion of the resource. Expected impacts resulting from the increased use are; damage and removal of trees from winch cables, onsite campfires, shooting, chopping etc.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: By not designating an off-road vehicle use area the impacts would be similar to the proposed action, but would be dispersed over a wider area. Without a identified off-road area and the associated promotion, overall use of the area is not expected to increase over current use trends.

Mitigation: None

GEOLOGY AND MINERALS

Affected Environment: Surface geology of the delineated area is of the upper Cretaceous series of the Mesaverde and Mancos group comprised of the Sego Sandstone, Buck tongue of the Mancos Shale, and Tongue of the Castlegate Sandstone. The rock crawling areas are located along the very light gray fine-grained massive Sego Sandstone and the light gray fine to medium grained Castlegate Sandstone.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Excessive use of the areas by tracked vehicles may lead to accelerated mass wasting of the sandstone outcrops.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The proposed rock crawling area has been inventoried at the Class III pedestrian level by Uinta Paleontological Associates (Bilbey and Hall 2006)who have identified six potentially fossil bearing units and one unit that is composed of alluvial and colluvial units that are not fossil bearing. The area is divided into two major groups with six units, the Mesaverde Group and the Mancos formation.

The Mesaverde Group is the upper most unit and is composed of the Williams Fork Formation, which produces vertebrates, plants, invertebrates and ichnofossils (trace fossils and tracks of various animals including dinosaurs), the Illes Formation, including the Trout Creek Sandstone which also produces vertebrates, plants, invertebrates and ichnofossils, and the Sego Sandstone, which produces marine invertebrates and crayfish trace fossils.

The second formation is the Mancos Formation which is composed of three units also. The upper most units are the Buck Tongue of the Mancos which produces the invertebrate marine fossil *Baculites perplexus*. The next unit down is the Castlegate Sandstone, which is know to produce Baculites, small fragments of petrified wood, invertebrate trace fossils, and possible bone fragments. The lowest unit is the main body of the Manos shales which produce invertebrates, rare vertebrates and plant debris.

Inventory identified one clear fossil locality, a very concentrated occurrence of Inoceramus clams in a bed like setting near the top of the Sego Sandstones. Various trace fossils were also noted, a number of which are outside of the proposed track ways for the rock crawling trails.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: If trails are not constructed to avoid the known fossil exposures fossils will be lost to erosion and possibly collection. Anchor points for winches could increase the rate of erosion if the points are located in fossiliferous areas. Loss of trace fossils is not considered to be a serious loss of fossil resources. If a trail goes through the fossil locality there would be an important loss of fossil data. Excursions outside of marked trail areas, which largely avoid known important fossils, will cause a loss of fossil resources and data.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: there would be no new impacts to fossil resources under the no action alternative.

Mitigation: 1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing paleontological sites, or for collecting fossils. If fossil materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear to be of noteworthy scientific interest
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not feasible)

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Fossil locality 5RB 5031 shall be avoided by all rock crawling trails. The applicant shall be required to ensure that the area on the map identified for avoidance is indeed avoided by all rock crawling trails and rock crawling activity.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The project area is within the Johnson-Trujillo grazing allotment the following table shows the acreage of public land and Animal Unit Months (AUMs) within the grazing allotment.

PERMITTED USE ALTERNATIVE B--GRAZING PERMIT #051446					
	Allotment Name	**Public Land Acreage**	**Livestock Active Use (AUMs)**	**Suspended Use (AUMs)****	**Total Permitted Use (AUMs)**
06338	Johnson Trujillo	20,757	2022	0	2022

The following chart shows the authorized grazing use for the Johnson-Trujillo allotment.

GRAZING SCHEDULE					
ALLOTMENT	NUMBER CLASS	BEGIN PERIOD	END PERIOD	%PL	AUMs
Johnson-Trujillo	2980 sheep	January 1	February 28	100	1156
Johnson-Trujillo	2980 sheep	March 1	April 14	100	882

There are 12 stock ponds on the allotment on which the grazing permittee has responsibility for maintaining the structure and functionality of these ponds. Three of the ponds are in the immediate vicinity of the project area; Westwood Pond (PR#5543), Sulphur Draw (PR#5544) and Theos Reservoir #1 (PR#4749).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The project area is used by sheep and the associated damage to vegetation would be a loss of forage for livestock. If use of the

project occurs while livestock are present it is expected that livestock will leave the immediate area which also makes additional forage unavailable. There is the opportunity for livestock within the project area to be hazed by off-road enthusiasts which could cause physical damage to sheep during escape from the area. Although there is expected to be a loss of forage, this loss is not expected to be such that the Permitted Use would be reduced. There have been problems in the Resource Area with off road users damaging stock ponds which is expected to occur within the project area. By having the Town of Rangely or their designee responsible for repairing damage to the stock ponds the impacts would be mitigated.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The surrounding area contains numerous range improvement projects including fences, springs and stockponds. To date there has been problems with fences being damaged and gates left open. Stock pond and springs have been damaged by off-road use. This damage is expected to continue at current rates.

Mitigation: The Town of Rangely or designee would be responsible for documenting the current condition (by photograph) the three stock ponds noted above. Damage to these stock ponds would be the responsibility of the Town of Rangely or designee.

REALTY AUTHORIZATIONS

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in an area with multiple linear rights-of-way and oil and gas activity. These include Northwest Pipeline's Rangely Pipeline Project and the Ignacio Sumas line, Public Service Company pipelines, and Moon Lake Electric distribution lines. The Rangely Bike Path COC50035, is located in section 10 and crosses the Jeep route. There are several active Oil and Gas leases in the area of the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Designation could create an additional usage as the area became publicized. While the multiple existing rights-of-way do not exclude compatible uses within the ROW width, the existing uses must be protected. Indiscriminate use would increase the possibility of negative impacts on utility lines and oil and gas facilities, as well as possible conflict between the bike trail, oil and gas traffic, and the rock crawlers. While no realty action would be needed for the BLM to designate the area, there should be a formal agreement with the Town of Rangely or appropriate organization for management of the area.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no designation, but there would be continued use of the area on an informal, unregulated basis.

Mitigation: Route identification and signage must create protection by avoiding or buffering the existing uses.

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The proposed action occurs within the White River Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). BLM custodially manages the ERMA to provide for unstructured recreation activities such as hunting, dispersed camping, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and off-highway vehicle use. The area receives consistent dispersed camping and four-wheeling use throughout the year due to it's proximity to the Town of Rangely and users have typically left trash and associated items. Oil and gas activity has been present for decades and also has left a considerable amount of trash and equipment. The closed Town of Rangely dump is adjacent to the northeast of the proposed jeep area and still has an abundance of trash.

The project area has been delineated a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). SPM physical and social recreation setting is typically characterized by a natural appearing environment with few administrative controls, low interaction between users but evidence of other users may be present. SPM recreation experience is characterized by a high probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans that offers an environment that offers challenge and risk.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: An increase in recreation use can be expected. Increases in recreational use will result in increases administrative controls such as signage and law enforcement patrols and an increase in the probability of interaction between users.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Increase in unmanaged recreation use is highly likely and may lead to increases in negative experiences between users.

Mitigation: Town of Rangely or other designee will enter into a MOU with the BLM White River Field Office (Attachment 1) to assure that all management objectives and mitigation measures are being met.

VISUAL RESOURCE

Affected Environment: The proposed action is within a VRM class IV area. The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action is small in scale relative to the surrounding landscape; therefore, any modifications will be unseen to the casual observer, and VRM IV objectives will be met.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impact on visual resources.

Mitigation: None.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: There is a large amount of oil and gas development in and around the proposed action. This development includes access roads, well pads, and pipelines. Without the implementation of the proposed action, continued unmanaged route creation is likely to occur. Contribution of any of the alternatives to the impacts from these existing activities/facilities (spread of noxious weeds, soil erosion, and impacts to water quality) would be minimal.

REFERENCES CITED:

Bilbey, Sue Ann, Ph.D. and Evan Hall
2006 Paleontological field Survey Report for the Rangely rock Crawl Area of Bureau of Land Management Properties in Northeast ¼ of Township 1 North, range 102 West, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Uinta Paleontological Associates, Inc., Vernal, Utah.

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CDPHE - Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC), 2004a. Regulation No. 37 Classifications and Numeric Standards for Lower Colorado River Basin. Adopted 1983 and Effective January 20, 2004.

CDPHE-WQCC, 2006b. "Status of Water Quality in Colorado – 2006, The Update to the 2002 and 2004 305(b) Report," April 2006.

CDPHE-WQCC, 2006c. "Regulation No. 93, 2006 Section 303(d) List Water-Quality-Limited Segments Requiring TMDLs," effective April 30.

CDPHE-WQCC, 2006d. "Regulation No. 94, 2006 Colorado's Monitoring and Evaluation List," effective April 30.

Topper, R., K.L. Spray, W.H. Bellis, J.L. Hamilton, and P.E. Barkmann. 2003. Groundwater Atlas of Colorado, Special Publication 53. Prepared for State of Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Division of Minerals and Geology. Colorado Geological Survey. Denver, Colorado.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: Town of Rangely and Rangely Rock Crawlers Association

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Michael Selle	Archeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Robert Fowler	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife
Melissa Kindall	Hazmat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Soils
Robert Fowler	Rangeland Management Specialist	Vegetation
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Robert Fowler	Rangeland Management Specialist	Rangeland Management
Linda Jones	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources
Melissa Kindall	Rangeland Technician	Wild Horses

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the mitigation listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES: 1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

3. The applicant shall be required to have a participant education program in place detailing the legal requirements for not collecting or molesting cultural resources in accordance with applicable law. The awareness statement shall stress the importance of site context and taking only pictures and leaving only foot prints, at most, at all site locations.

4. The Town of Rangely or designee would be responsible for yearly monitoring of the project area to document the occurrence of noxious weed species. With the exception of cheatgrass and halogeton the permit holder is responsible for weed control in accordance with bureau policy and approvals by the BLM.

5. It is recommended that breeding bird surveys be conducted within the project area prior to approval of routes (late-May to early-June 2006). The project area should continue to be monitored each spring following implementation to determine abundance and distribution of breeding birds.

6. The applicants shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed actions.

7. Construction of sediment retention structures below identified routes in Johnson Draw, Sulphur Draw, and Coal Mine Draw may be necessary to minimize potential increases in salt/sediment loads to the White River.

8. Restrict vehicular travel to identified travel routes (year round).

9. Barriers would be installed in specific locations to limit travel to the approved routes.

10. It is recommended that surveys be conducted each breeding season to determine the location and status (e.g., active vs. inactive) of woodland and cliff-dwelling raptors. If active nests are located, it is recommended that those areas be voluntarily avoided during the breeding season (1 February through mid-August or until the young have fledged).

11. It is recommended that no activity take place within the project area during 1 December to 30 April to minimize undue stress and displacement of wintering mule deer.

12. It is recommended that the route west of Johnson Draw and the connecting route to the east be removed from the proposed action. Portions of these routes do not follow existing rock surfaces and as such would result in the establishment of new route(s) through previously undisturbed areas.

13. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing paleontological sites, or for collecting fossils. If fossil materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear to be of noteworthy scientific interest

- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not feasible)

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

15. Fossil locality 5RB 5031 shall be avoided by all rock crawling trails. The applicant shall be required to ensure that the area on the map identified for avoidance is indeed avoided by all rock crawling trails and rock crawling activity.

16. The Town of Rangely or designee would be responsible for documenting the current condition (by photograph) the three stock ponds noted above. Damage to these stock ponds would be the responsibility of the Town of Rangely or designee.

17. Route identification and signage must create protection by avoiding or buffering the existing uses.

18. Town of Rangely or other designee will enter into a MOU with the BLM White River Field Office (Attachment 1) to assure that all management objectives and mitigation measures are being met.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Will be conducted by the BLM resource specialists and the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association as described in Attachment 1.

NAME OF PREPARER: Chris P Ham

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline P Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Kent T. Walter
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 06/09/06

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment 1; Memorandum of Understanding between Rangely Rock Crawlers Association and the BLM White River Field Office
Map 1, Proposed Action

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MEMORANDIUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between the
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WHITE RIVER FIELD OFFICE
and
The Rangely Rock Crawlers Association

This agreement is entered into by the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, White River Field Office, hereafter referred to as WRFO, and the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association, hereafter referred to as RRA.

I. PURPOSE:
The purpose of this document is to provide a general framework of cooperation between the above parties in the management of the Rangely Jeep Trail Area.

II. AUTHORITY:
Section 307 (b) (c) of the federal Land Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA); and the BLM National OHV Management Strategy

III. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFITS:
The WRFO has worked cooperatively with the RRA to construct and maintain the Rangely Jeep Trail Area. It is in the mutual benefit of both the organizations that the trails be well managed and the impacts and benefits of the trail be monitored and documented. The BLM has the responsibility to manage public lands for multiple uses, including recreation. The RRA is a non-profit club formed to enjoy recreational jeeping and as an organization to ensure appropriate access to public lands.

In consideration of the above premise: the parties agree as follows:

IV. WRFO SHALL:
1. Monitor and maintain the Rangely Jeep Trail Area.
2. Use internal and external funding to manage the Rangely Jeep Trail Area.
3. Provide signs, maps and patrols to educate and inform the public about the trail and the responsibilities of the public land visitors specific to this recreation opportunity.
4. Train members of the RRA in the techniques of monitoring of the trail and associated impacts.
5. Recognize the mission and goals of the RRA especially as it relates to safe and enjoyable use of public lands for OHV opportunities.
6. Supervise volunteer activities by RRA in support of the Rangely Jeep Trail Area.

V. RRA SHALL:

1. Organize volunteers to work with the public to educate and inform them about the trail and its special conditions of use. Distribute maps, fliers and public information pieces to the public.
2. Assist the WRFO with monitoring and visitor surveys, signing and other routine maintenance work.
3. Keep accurate accounting of volunteer hours so as to be able to apply for challenge cost share funding.
4. Assist BLM in discouraging use when requested by BLM to minimize stress on wildlife or for other purposes.

VI. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED THAT:

1. Either party may terminate this memorandum in part or in whole by providing 30 days written notice to the other party whenever it is determined that the other parties have materially failed to comply with the conditions of this memo.
2. This agreement terminates 1 year from the date of the last signature. It may be renewed prior to the termination date by mutual agreement of the parties. If the decision after the first year of operation of the trail is to keep the trail open to the public, this agreement shall be automatically extended for 5 years.
3. No funds will be transferred between the parties as a result of this memo.
4. Each party shall comply with Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964, that no person in the united States shall, on the basis of race, color, handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participation, be on the benefits of, or otherwise subject to discrimination under any program or activity for which the recipient receives Federal financial assistance and will immediately take any measures to effectuate this memo.
5. No part of this memo shall entitle the parties to any share or interest in the project or the right to use and enjoy the same under the existing regulations of the Bureau of Land management.
6. This agreement may be revised as necessary by mutual written consent of all parties.

The parties hereto have executed this agreement as of the last day written below.

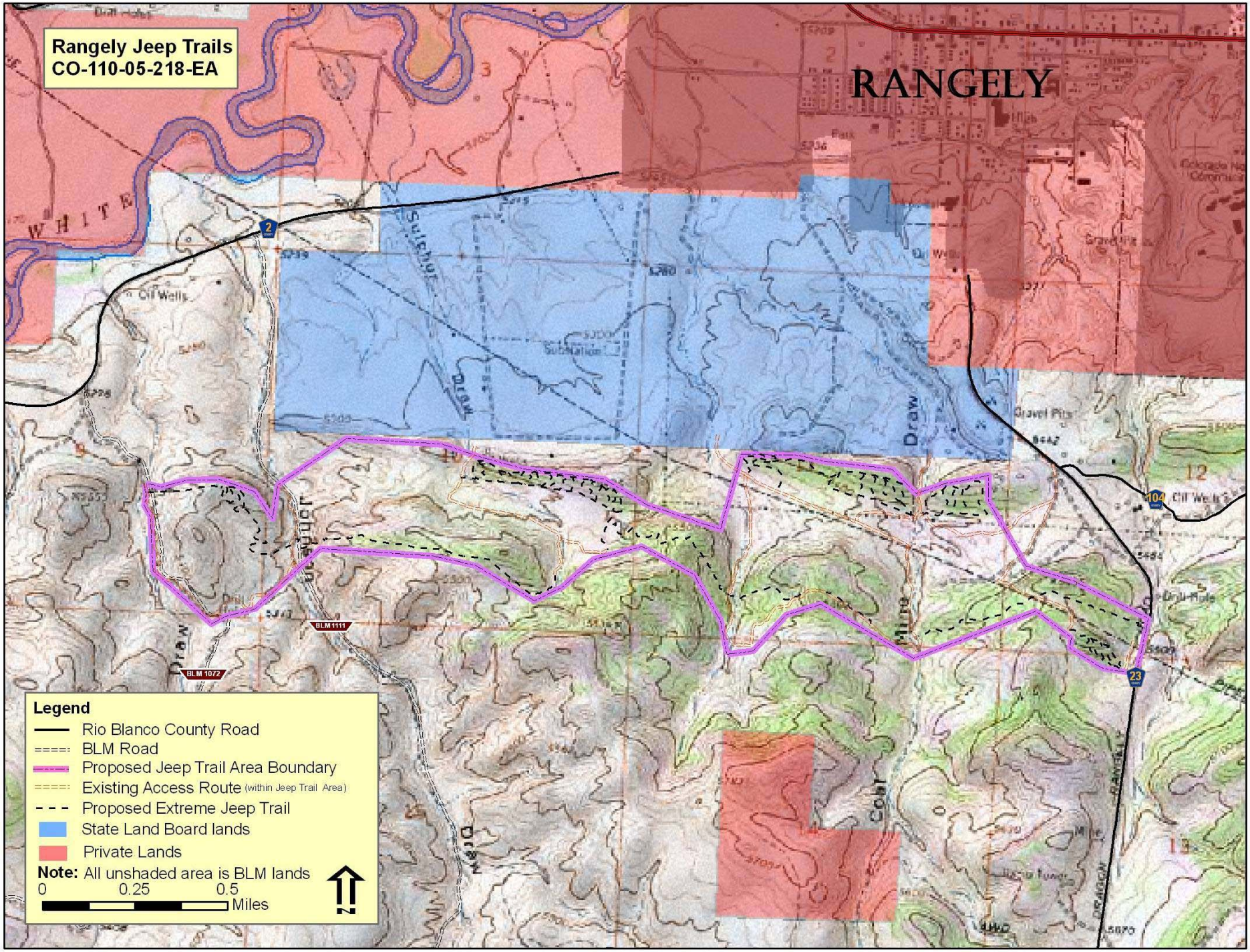
Bureau of Land Management White River Field Office:

_____ _____
Signature, Field Manager Date

Rangely Rock Crawlers Association:

_____ _____
Signature, President Date

Map 1


Rangely Jeep Trails
CO-110-05-218-EA
RANGELY
WHITE
Oil Wells
Subdivision
Draw
Gravel Pits
Johnson
Draw
BLM 1111
BLM 1072
Cedar
Mesa
Legend
Rio Blanco County Road
BLM Road
Proposed Jeep Trail Area Boundary
Existing Access Route (within Jeep Trail Area)
Proposed Extreme Jeep Trail
State Land Board lands
Private Lands
Note: All unshaded area is BLM lands
0 0.25 0.5
Miles